

Message Text

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12
ACTION EUR-12

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R 201042Z FEB 76
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6828
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STOCKHOLM 894

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, CU, SW
SUBJECT: CONTROVERSY OVER PROJECTED CASTRO VISIT TO SWEDEN

REF: (A) STOCKHOLM 322, (B) STOCKHOLM 850, (C) STOCKHOLM 753

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. CONTROVERSY HAS ARISEN IN SWEDISH POLITICAL CIRCLES OVER THE PROJECTED VISIT TO SWEDEN OF CUBAN PRIME MINISTER FIDEL CASTRO (REF A). AT THE SAME MEETING OF THE FOREIGN POLICY COUNCIL WHICH APPROVED GOS RECOGNITION OF ANGOLA, MODRATE PATY LEADER GOSTA BOHMAN ASSERTED THAT IT WOULD BE INADVISABLE TOINVITE CASTRO TO VISIT SWEDEN IN THE LIGHT OF CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA.

2. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION FOR SOME TIME THAT CASTRO WOULD BE INVITED TO VISIT SWEDEN FOLLOWING THE SPTEMBER PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, THE GOS HAD NEVER OFFICIALLY CONFIRMED
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THAT A VISIT THIS YEAR WAS CONTEMPLATED. HOWEVER, THE

OPPOSITION PRESS REPORTED FEBRUARY 18 THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD EARLIER CONSIDERED INVITING CASTRO TO VISIT SWEDEN THIS SPRING, BUT ON DUE REFLECTION, HAD DECIDED TO POSTPONE THE VISIT UNTIL OCTOBER (AFTER THE ELECTIONS). THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN CASTRO AND SWEDISH PRIME MINISTER PALME ON THE VISIT, BUT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE WAS KEEPING THE CORRESPONDENCE SECRET, REGARDING THE LETTERS AS "PRIVATE MESSAGES" RATHER THAN PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.

3. ON FEBRUARY 19, PALME AIDE PIERRE SCHORI DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH CORRESPONDENCE. HE TOLD THE PRESS THAT WHEN PALME HAD VISITED HAVANA IN JUNE 1975 HE HAD TENDERED AN INVITATION TO CASTRO TO VISIT SWEDEN AND THAT SUBSEQUENTLY THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR IN STOCKHOLM HAD INFORMED THE GOS THAT CASTRO WOULD BE PLEASED TO COME, BUT THAT NO DATE HAD BEEN SET. SCHORI ADDED THAT "IT IS UP TO THE CUBANS TO DECIDE WHEN THEY WANT TO COME."

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4. COMMENT: SCHORI'S COMMENTS NOTWITHSTANDING, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE GOS HAD EARLIER CONSIDERED SCHEDULING A CASTRO VISIT TO STOCKHOLM THIS SPRING IN LINE WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S POLICY OF LARGELY REMAINING AT HOME THIS ELECTION YEAR AND RECEIVING THE HOMAGE OF FOREIGN LEADERS, BUT DECIDED THAT A VISIT BEFORE THE ELECTIONS BY THE CONTROVERSIAL CUBAN WAS TOO RISKY POLITICALLY. SOME WEEKS AGO, MFA OFFICIALS HAD ADVISED US THAT SUCH A VISIT WAS CONSIDERED BUT LATER ABANDONED (REF A). OPPOSITION LEADER BOHMAN IS EXPLOITING THE CURRENT SWEDISH CONCERN AT CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA BY DRAWING ATTENTION TO PALME'S TIES WITH THE CUBAN LEADER. FOR HIS PART, PALME CAN BE EXPECTED TO PUT THE VISIT ON THE BACK-BURNER UNTIL ELECTIONS ARE OUT OF THE WAY, IRESPECTIVE OF ANY IDEOLOGICAL ATTRACTION CASTRO MAY HOLD FOR HIM.
STRAUSZ-HUPE'

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